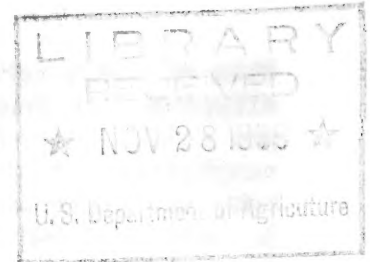


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OUR 4-H CLUB RESPONSIBILITY/1

By
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Field Agent

I truly believe that 4-H Club work is one of the really big essentials and undertakings of the United States today - that of building the boy and girl of the present into the men and women of tomorrow, and it is upon these men and women of tomorrow that we may depend to solve the agricultural problems now harassing us.

When we say that farm youth should go back to the farm to find their life work, we first should consider what kind of farm they can go back to. Whether or not they go back to the farm should depend on the life they may expect to live on that farm, their own ambitions, their abilities and training.

I am speaking here today to 475 of the outstanding Negro farm youth of North Carolina. Some of you will go back to the farm and find there your richest opportunity. But some of you will not go back to the farm. In this audience there are future agriculturists, future teachers, doctors and lawyers, industrialists, and leaders in public thought and action.

One hundred years ago people lived at home and did a complete job of farming because they had to. Lack of easy distribution as we have it today and the hardships of transportation and travel made it so. Then came the automobile, good roads, and the World War, and people began to think in terms of cash crops instead of in terms of a livelihood first, with a little something to sell thereafter. Also came mortgage companies, especially during the wartime period when cotton, tobacco, peanut and other commodity prices were so high. Most farmers were encouraged to mortgage their crops, and in many cases their farms and homes to obtain the so-called higher standards of living.

Then came the readjustment period following the World War, and during this 20-year transition we have not cooperated with Mother Nature nor have we even been kind to her. We have shamefully mined our soil fertility for cash crops - cotton, tobacco, and peanuts, and allowed our soils to wash down the hillsides, or, by constant cropping, depleted

/1 Talk given at the State 4-H Club short course for Negroes, Agricultural and Technical College, Greensboro, N.C., August 25, 1939.

them of their fertility forever. As a consequence, farm owners have been slipping into tenancy and the wage class at the rate of some 40,000 families per year. These families have depleted the assets of health and stamina completely, and are lacking in character and the incentive necessary to make the fight back to ownership. I am glad today that I am privileged to face this 4-H Club group of boys and girls from the farms. You have the courage and stamina to cooperate among yourselves in an effort to acquire better standards of living than families of the past generations had.

An idle horse or mule in the barn is worse than a bad trade; likewise, an idle man sitting around a country store is worse than an idle mule in the barn. Both are eating their heads off. We dislike to admit it, but it is a fact that our southern mules and southern men stand idle more than half of the working days of the year. All of which means we must get away from our crop farming. We must diversify. We must plan for a year-round income, which means an income each month of the year from our farms. And with that monthly income we shall have year-round employment.

"Times are different now," lamented Dr. D. W. Daniels of Clemson College speaking before a group of farm people a year or so ago. During the depression of 1893 when he was a boy he added, the dad called his boy about 4 o'clock, told him to go out to the blackberry patch and get his breakfast, catch the mule out of the bottoms and take some corn to the mill, and get back about daylight to start plowing. In the present years, dad calls his boy about 8 o'clock, tells him to crank up the Ford, go to town and get the balance of the rehabilitation loan, go by and get some W. P. A. relief money, go by the Red Cross and get five sacks of flour, stop at the filling station and swap three of them for some gasoline, and then buy three sticks of dynamite so they can go fishing. I mention this incident to impress upon you the great changes that have come about in the past 50 years.

There appeared in the Southern Workman, a Negro publication, in January 1938, the following statement: "There is no place for us. No area in which we may serve. There is nothing for us to do. There are no problems which we are permitted to solve. We see no place where we can apply the education which we have received. Older men and women have pre-empted the fields of striving. The future for us is blank."

(Discussion)

Granting that the world owes you a living, you cannot have that living on your own terms unless you strive for it. I hope all of you will be ambitious to succeed in life and will be willing to pay the price of success.

The sin of the age is that too many are thinking of what they can get and not what they can give. It appears to me that there are too many

cases in which too much emphasis is being placed on Government's contribution to the individual, rather than on the great privilege the citizen has in enjoying the blessings of modern life today.

You set the pattern for your younger brothers and sisters. You can participate and perhaps initiate farm- and home-management planning councils. You can set the standard of contacts, make the family socially responsible for the community, develop recreation and active interest in civic affairs, and create an appreciation of the resources of farm life. You can be an unselfish member of your family and contribute your part to a fair division of work and money. You can be a great factor in raising the cultural and educational standards in your own home and community. 4-H Club work fails if it does not help its members to be not only dependable and active club members, but dependable and responsible members of their own homes.

We have blessings in the country that are priceless. The music of the morning woodland, the beauty of the flowers and of stars can all add to the joy of living. We must learn to have fun in farming. We must make recreation out of growing the choicest flowers or fruits or nuts. We must have hobbies in agriculture and side lines that may be nonproductive in cash but of lasting value in joy and satisfaction, in health and recreation, and in ambition and development.

I believe we should pause in conclusion and give some attention to the most priceless of all human possessions - the ability to develop personality. Everyone must sell personality to get along in the world. We are all salesmen selling our ideas, plans, and enthusiasm to those with whom we come in contact. Merchants sell goods, doctors sell medical service, lawyers sell advice, ministers sell religion, extension agents sell education, a lover sells himself, and we all are selling our personalities.

Public relationship and self-improvement is based on the science of salesmanship, which is the science of human relationships.

Salesmanship is the art and science of dealing with people so that they will become permanently satisfied and continuously profitable customers or clients. If you want to sell personality, there are three main points in obtaining this end; First, live orderly; second, smile; and third, call those with whom you come in contact by name.

It takes 72 muscles to frown and only 14 to smile. The sweetest music in the world to a boy is the sound of his own name.

There is no need for any further action to be taken in this regard.

Very truly yours,
[Signature]
[Name]
[Title]
[Address]
[City]
[State]
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